

FAST **FACTS**

Recent Statistics from The Library Research Service

ED3/110.10/No. 121

August 9, 1996

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS IN COLORADO: A 1995-96 STATUS REPORT

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.”

Whoever said it, it could not have been truer of Colorado’s school library media centers (LMCs) in 1996. The 1995-96 school year was another year of dramatic changes associated with the information superhighway, but it was also the second year in a row of alarming LMC staff cuts.

Following is a brief summary of the good news and the bad news about LMCs:

The Good News

- School libraries really have become multimedia information centers. Almost 28,000 CD-ROM products are available via the state’s LMCs--an increase of more than three and a half times since 1994. Video collections have almost doubled in size during the same period.
- In addition to expanding their own collections beyond print formats, LMCs are also at the forefront of the electronic information revolution. Almost two out of three LMCs provide Internet access to teachers and other school staff, and almost half provide it to students. A major on-ramp to the information superhighway is the Access Colorado Library & Information Network (ACLIN). Since 1994, the proportion of LMCs providing Internet--and specifically ACLIN--access has almost tripled.

- Almost a third of LMCs provide electronic access to the full-text of periodical literature. This proportion has almost doubled in two years.

The Bad News

- Library media staff in Colorado’s public schools is being deprofessionalized. Statewide, the number of LMC staff was reduced by seven percent from 1994 levels, but the number of endorsed professionals was reduced by almost twice as much. Thus, in 1996, there were nearly 100 fewer library media specialists than two years before.
- The ratio of total LMC staff to students was reduced by 10 percent between 1994 and 1996, but the ratio of library media specialists to students was reduced by half.
- Thus, it is not surprising that the amount of time spent by LMC staff in collaboration with classroom teachers dropped by one quarter during this interval.

LMC STAFFING

Between 1994 and 1996, overall LMC staffing was reduced seriously and de-professionalized to an alarming degree.



Highlights:

- Ninety-five library media specialist positions--one out of eight--disappeared.
- Twenty-two staff who lacked library media credentials, but who were certified teachers, lost their jobs or were re-assigned to classrooms.
- Twenty-two other staff--chiefly library media aides--also lost their positions in LMCs

Table 1. LMC Staff, 1994-96

Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)	1994	1996	% Change
Library media specialists	772	677	-12%
Staff with 18 hours in library media	172	180	5%
Certified teachers (without library media)	163	141	-13%
BOCES or other contract staff	9	9	0%
Other staff	845	823	-3%
Total LMC staff	1,961	1,830	-7%

As the number of library media staff dropped between 1994 and 1996, the ratios of library media specialists to students and of total LM staff to students declined. Library media specialists per 100 students plummeted by half, while total LMC staff per 100 students dropped a noticeable 10 percent.

Table 2. Staffing Levels, 1994-96

Staff-to-Student Ratio	1994	1996	% Change
Library media specialists per 100 students	0.12	.08	-50%
Total LMC staff per 100 students	0.31	.28	-10%

Due to these cuts in LMC staffing levels and ratios, LMC staff were unable to spend as many hours per typical week collaborating with teachers. The only such activity in which LMC staff invested more hours in 1996 than in 1994 was evaluating students' work.

Table 3. Hours Spent in Selected Instructional Activities by LMC Staff, 1994-96

Hours per typical week spent ...	1994	1996	% Change
Identifying materials to support instructional units developed by teachers	6,872	5,271	-23%
Teaching cooperatively	6,509	5,158	-21%
Planning instructional units with teachers	3,161	2,384	-25%
Evaluating students' work	1,820	2,241	23%
Total selected hours	18,362	15,054	-18%

LMC COLLECTIONS

Between 1994 and 1996, collections in Colorado's school library media centers began to change dramatically. These changes are evident in both total numbers of items held and ratios of items held to students.

Highlights:

- The size of LMC book collections was virtually unchanged between 1994 and 1996.
- LMC holdings in electronic formats grew dramatically. Numbers of CD-ROMs more than tripled, while numbers of videos almost doubled. Software collections also grew, although at a more modest rate, just keeping up with enrollments.

Table 4. LMC Collections, 1994-96

Format	1994	1996	% Change
Volumes	10,059,330	10,113,835	1%
Videos	157,206	284,272	81%
Software packages	76,457	85,353	12%
Print periodical subscriptions	43,696	40,006	-8%
CD-ROMs	7,827	27,457	251%
Newspaper subscriptions	2,366	2,951	25%

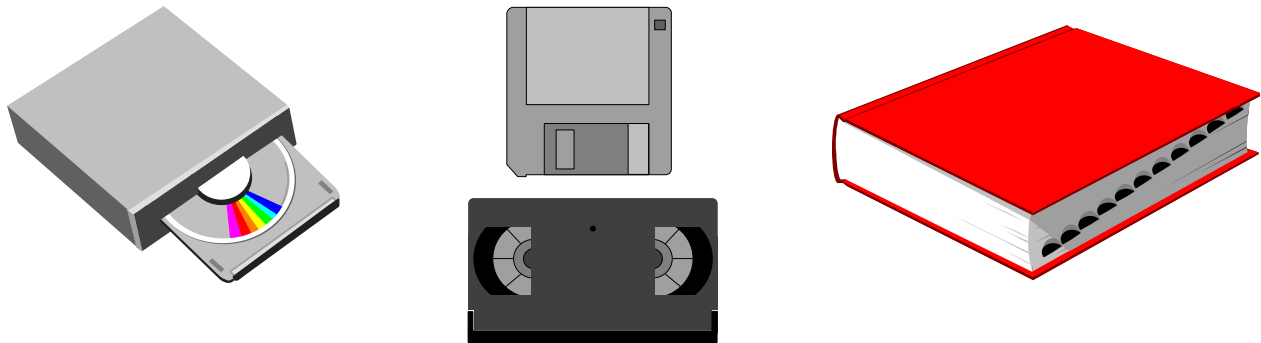


Table 5. Collection Ratios, 1994-96

Ratio	1994	1996	% Change
Volumes per student	18	18	0%
Videos per 100 students	17	26	53%
Software packages per 100 students	5	5	0%
Print periodical subscriptions per 100 students	6	5	-17%

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

This revolution can be traced to the migration of information from print to electronic form. LMCs provide access to locally owned or leased information in electronic form and search online databases and networks, such as ACLIN and the Internet.

More LMCs are purchasing or leasing electronic access to periodical literature.

Highlights:

Between 1994 and 1996 ...

- LMCs purchased or leased electronic indexes to periodical literature increased by almost one-fifth.
- The proportion of LMCs purchasing or leasing electronic full-text of periodicals almost doubled.

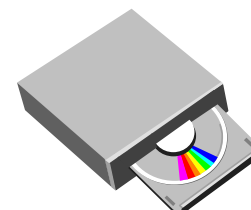


Table 6. Periodicals in Electronic Form, 1994-96

Type of access	1994	1996	% Change
Index only	22%	26%	18%
Full-text	16%	30%	88%

More and more, LMCs are reaching beyond their own local collections to those of other LMCs in their districts or to remote databases. Over half have local online catalogs, and over one quarter have district-wide online catalogs. Online database searching dropped slightly, probably due to the increasing availability of CD-ROM database products.

Table 7. Online Catalogs & Databases, 1994-96

Feature	1994	1996	% Change
Have a stand-alone local online catalog	46%	56%	22%
Have a district-wide online catalog	20%	28%	40%
Provide online database search services	29%	25%	-14%



Between 1994 and 1996, the proportions of LMCs offering the Access Colorado Library and Information Network (ACLIN) to different client groups increased. The state network is now in use by two out of three LMC staff and teachers and almost half of students.

Table 8. ACLIN Use via LMCs, 1994-96

User Group	1994	1996	% Change
ACLIN available to LMC staff	49%	66%	35%
ACLIN available to teachers and staff	47%	60%	28%
ACLIN available to students	43%	47%	9%

During the same interval, the number of LMCs providing Internet access to teachers and staff almost tripled, while those providing such access to students increased more than two and a half times.

Table 9. Internet Access via LMCs, 1994-96

User Group	1994	1996	% Change
Internet available to LMC staff	24%	64%	167%
Internet available to teachers and staff	21%	60%	186%
Internet available to students	16%	43%	169%

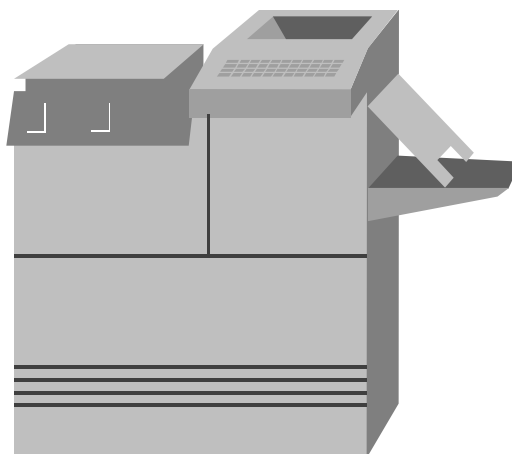
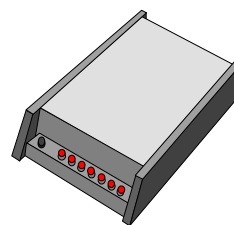
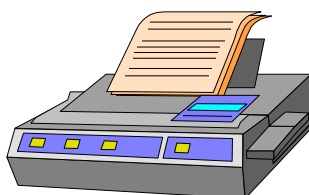
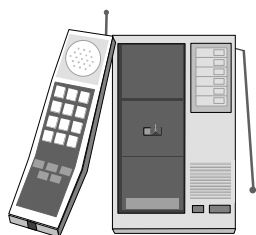
In addition to these various forms of electronic access to information, basic information technologies also became more prevalent in LMCs.

Highlights:

- The proportion of LMCs with fax machines increased by more than three-quarters.
- Proportions of LMCs with touch tone telephone service and computer modems increased modestly. Nine out of ten LMCs have telephones, and three out of four have computers with modems.
- The proportion of LMCs with photocopiers--two out of five--is virtually unchanged, having decreased by a negligible two percent.

Table 10. Basic Technology in LMCs, 1994-96

Basic technology	1994	1996	% Change
Telephone with touch tone service	78%	85%	9%
Photocopier	43%	42%	-2%
Fax machine	18%	32%	77%
Computer modem	69%	74%	7%



LMC SERVICES

Likely as a result of these major shifts in key resources--both staff and collections--the services provided by library media centers (LMCs) during a typical week changed dramatically.

Highlights:

- Visits to LMCs dropped slightly, but circulation increased by over half.
- Resource sharing efforts among LMCs and other libraries (chiefly public and academic) increased sharply. There are two likely causes of this development. One is that, through such efforts, LMC staff may be struggling to take up some of the slack created by the new investments being made in non-print--chiefly electronic--formats. The other likelihood is that these increases in resource sharing are the fruits of school participation in the Access Colorado Library and Information Network (ACLIN).



Table 6. Weekly LMC Services, 1994-96

Type of transaction	1994	1996	% Change
LMC visits	793,318	743,148	-6%
Circulation transactions	878,685	1,370,507	56%
Items obtained from other libraries or document delivery services	21,846	32,178	47%
Items loaned to other libraries	12,528	11,831	-6%

Ratio measures of LMC service reiterate these points. Clearly, the declining size of LMC staff and collections and the advent of the statewide resource sharing network combined to create overwhelming “push-and-pull” forces in this direction.

Highlights:

- On a per student basis, visits to LMCs and circulation of materials remained virtually unchanged between 1994 and 1996. New measures are needed to reflect increasing reliance on electronic resources and remote access from classrooms and homes.
- Although still net borrowers, LMCs took a big step toward becoming net lenders of materials.

Table 7. Service Ratios, 1994-96

Ratio	1994	1996	% Change
LMC visits per student	1.2	1.1	-8%
Circulation per student	1.4	1.3	-7%
Net loan rate (items loaned/items borrowed)	0.33	0.40	21%

LMC EXPENDITURES

The prime mover of retrenchment in LMC collection development is obvious: funding for LMC materials dropped sharply between 1994 and 1996.

Highlights:

- Investments from school budgets in books and other printed materials rose modestly, while investments from other sources in such materials climbed. But, the increased expenditures from other sources came nowhere close to making up for the meager increases in school budgets.
- Despite the dramatic increases in CD-ROMs, videos, and software packages in LMC collections, school investments in non-print materials rose only modestly, while funds from other sources for such materials dropped. Evidently, it is easier to persuade other funders to pick up the slack in book budgets than it is to convince them to purchase videos or CD-ROMs on the school's behalf. Fortunately, costs of materials in most electronic formats are either dropping or at least growing at a slower rate than the costs of print materials, particularly periodicals.
- The cut of over half a million dollars from supplies and other operating costs cannot be readily explained with certainty. It seems likely, however, that LMCs which lose their library media specialists would also see parts of their budgets disappear.



Table 8. LMC Expenditures from School Budgets, 1994-96

Category	1994	1996	% Change
Books & other printed materials	\$5,886,829	6,207,007	5%
Non-print materials	\$1,488,037	1,516,107	2%
Supplies & other operating costs	\$2,249,818	1,631,977	-27%
Total materials expenditures	\$9,869,346	9,355,091	-5%

Table 9. LMC Expenditures from Other Sources, 1994-96

Category	1994	1996	% Change
Books & other printed materials	\$929,478	1,032,372	11%
Non-print materials	\$458,329	307,000	-33%
Supplies & other operating costs	\$115,080	255,347	122%
Total materials expenditures	\$1,508,088	1,594,719	6%

On a per student basis, LMC funding rose 13 percent between 1994 and 1996. This increase was driven largely by increased spending on books and other print materials, as spending on non-print items dropped by a similar percentage. Spending on supplies and other operating costs was virtually unchanged.

Table 10. LMC Expenditures per Student, 1994-96

Category	1994	1996	% Change
Books & other printed materials	\$10.72	\$11.90	11%
Non-print materials	\$2.47	\$2.17	-12%
Supplies & other operating costs	\$1.66	\$1.69	2%
Total materials expenditures	\$15.54	\$17.51	13%